

# Introduction

Efforts to strengthen the practice and understanding of design through diverse forms of research have led to questions about the nature of “design knowledge.” Is there a distinctive kind of knowledge that characterizes the discipline, and if there is, what is its nature? David Wang and Ali Ilhan address this question in “Holding Creativity Together: A Sociological Theory of the Design Professions.” Applying ideas from Thomas Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Wang and Ilhan argue that instead of an epistemological approach to characterizing design, it may be more appropriate to turn to a sociological approach. To develop this idea they have recourse to a four-component matrix drawn from Kuhn. Their discussion directly challenges many of the current positions on the matter of design knowledge and offers a new perspective at a time when other discussions appear to have lost some energy.

Historical research is a cornerstone of inquiry into the nature and practice of design, and in this issue of the journal Helena Barbosa, Anna Calvara, and Vasco Branco provide an account of design in its most commercial form: advertising. The article, “Portugal’s First Advertising Agency: Raul de Caldevilla and the ETP, 1914-1923,” adds another facet to the complicated story of design and marketing in the twentieth century. That story is significant in part because some scholars have argued that the intellectual discipline of rhetoric first reemerged in our time in the forms of advertising and marketing in the early decades of the twentieth century. The portrait of Raul de Caldevilla reveals a set of important international connections as well as a vital moment in the development to design in Portugal.

A sociological turn in design research may be quietly taking shape. At least, several of the articles in this issue of the journal point in that direction. For example, in the next article, “Witnesses to Design: A Phenomenology of Comparative Design,” Blackwell, Eckert, Bucciarelli, and Earl present a study that focuses on “the experience of being a designer and doing design.” However, instead of presenting another case study that describes individual experience, they compare experiences of designers across a wide range of professional engagements and a wide range of professional practices. Their argument for a comparative method as well as their application of an “Across Design” approach in a joint project involving MIT and Cambridge University encourages a new line of inquiry that is grounded in phenomenology and social interaction. They suggest that such an approach is important not only for design practice but also for design research.

While some researchers try to isolate and characterize “design knowledge,” other researchers focus on emerging forms of design practice and the significance of those forms for social and cultural life. In “Design and the Construction of Publics,” Carl DiSalvo investigates the role of design and designers in collective political action. The sophisticated view developed by John Dewey in *The Public and Its Problems* is a point of departure for DiSalvo. The idea that “publics” are constructed through design action is a powerful antidote to the naïve belief that publics exist without human action. In the theater, for example, there may be many people who pay the price of admission, but a crowd becomes an audience only through the power of a dramatic performance that collectively engages thought and emotion in tracing the fate of characters on the stage. DiSalvo’s argument opens a new pathway for design studies that has theoretical as well as practical implications for the field. It leads to a discussion of two specific design tactics—*projection* and *tracing*—and to a discussion of interesting design projects of the kind that ought to be included in efforts to understand the social role of design in contemporary life. What is more, the article also moves toward establishing grounds for the criticism and assessment of such projects—a matter that has been neglected or avoided for too long in the field.

Though probably not what DiSalvo had in mind, the next two articles present deliberate design efforts to construct publics for design and for their countries. The articles continue an informal series of articles that have occurred from time to time in the journal, focusing on different accounts of important design exhibitions. In “Turkey in the Great Exhibition of 1851,” Gülname Turan tells the story of Turkey’s participation in the Crystal Palace exhibition of culture and industry that is the public emblem of design in the nineteenth century. Her account of the Turkish gallery as well as the critical response to the gallery add to our understanding and appreciation of industrialization in Turkey and the place of Turkey in the development of design. In “Relaxed and Comfortable: The Australian Pavilion at Expo ’67,” Carolyn Barnes, Barbara Hall, and Simon Jackson tell the complex story of emergent modernism in Australia and the development of design. As the authors write, “The nature of the Montreal pavilion was the corollary of wanting Australia to appear modern, and engaging professional designers to supply an appropriate look. The bold move to privilege a certain quality of experience over specific exhibits had some success for Australia.” These articles lead us again to the understanding that design is global in its reach and implications.

The final article in this issue is “Design in Mind,” by Ann Heylighen, Humberto Cavallin, and Matteo Bianchin. Although they acknowledge that it is time to move on from comparisons between design and research—the idea that design is a form of

research or that research is a form of design—they believe that “an ontological and epistemological comparison between the nature of design and that of scientific research” will help to explain the contribution of design to the creation of new knowledge. To this end they discuss philosopher John R. Searle’s concept of intentionality and the “direction of fit” between the mind and objects in the world. One outcome of the effort is to provide arguments for the value of “teaching research methods to design students.”

### **Editors’ Note**

This issue of the journal marks the relocation of the editorial offices of *Design Issues* from the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University to the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Ordinarily, the relocation of a journal requires little explanation. When *Design Issues* relocated from the University of Illinois at Chicago to Carnegie Mellon University in 1994, we found it important simply to reaffirm our editorial policy and the signature elements that make the journal distinctive in the field.

With the current move, we can certainly confirm that the editorial policy of the journal will remain unchanged. Similarly, the mixture of design history, criticism, and theory that has been a signature feature of the journal from its beginning in 1983 also will remain unchanged. This is true, too, of our deep commitment to pluralism. As we explained in our 1994 editorial (Volume X, No. 1), pluralism to the editors is “a belief that the understanding of design is best advanced through the interplay of contrasting perspectives and approaches represented among those who practice design as well as those who study it.” All of these aspects of *Design Issues* fit comfortably within the framework of the Weatherhead School of Management, where the commitment to design today is perhaps stronger than at any other business school in the world. With programs on sustainability, social entrepreneurship, management by design, and appreciative inquiry, the Weatherhead is well positioned to foster the new design thinking that has always been the focus of *Design Issues*. Finally, we are very pleased to acknowledge that our publisher, The MIT Press, has been a strong supporter of *Design Issues* for many years and that our relationship will continue.

### **Thanks**

A successful journal is a model of the community that coalesces around disciplinary interests, professional agendas, and a shared passion for ideas. This community is global in extent and, in the case of *Design Issues*, includes designers, researchers, critics, historians, and specialists from a wide variety of fields. The table of contents for any issue of the journal lists the members of the community who have stepped forward to lead the discussions

prompted by the articles in that particular number. Opposite the table of the contents, on the inside cover page, a second list appears: the editorial staff. Working with the editors, they are responsible for managing the design and production of each issue. With the relocation of the journal from Carnegie Mellon University to Case Western Reserve University, there are some changes to this list. As we initiate a new chapter in the journal's history it is important to acknowledge the contribution of those members of the community who have contributed so much to the success of the journal. The editors wish to thank the following individuals for their service: Diane Stadelmeier (Managing Editor), Mary Catharine Johnsen (Associate Book Review Editor), and Karen Moyer (Designer). For the last fifteen years, this team has worked tirelessly to insure that each issue of the journal meets the highest standards of publishing. We also want to thank the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University, its faculty, and the many students who were involved with the journal over the years.

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